k: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

XI

Days of Ease

133 OUR NEXT OBJECTIVE lay before us—the dark sandstone walls of the Jabal Tawil—"the long-drawn-out Mountain." From its foot it is only an eight-hours' ride by camel to the oasis of Jauf at the southern end of the Wadi Sirhan. We shaped our course towards the middle of the slope, passing over steep spurs hemmed in by black rocks. Among the deep clefts of the ancient range Faris knew how to pick out the one that gives access to the Mustanda Pass, over which we could de-
ooo scend into the plain beyond. There we found a small Ruala camp, where we were received with open arms, and where we decided to linger for a whole week, to rest and pasture our *dhaluls*.

• [437] It was in this week that Faris secured the silver anklerings that he had promised to his betrothed. He rode to Jauf and there bartered one of his young ostriches for the trinkets.

For me it was a memorable week of meditation and reflection, with no lack of new impressions. With Mnahi I roamed the fastnesses of the Tawil; I, just for the mere enjoyment of being there; he, on the lookout for game. He shot a number of ibex, among them some magnificent specimens. But despite the presence of these wild goats, the range is oppressively desolate, its predominant tint dark, even blackish, and the outcrop of red and

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

Šenne is the piece of an old, thoroughly dried hide which is stretched over the round hole of the violin-like rebec. It forms the sounding space and vibrates whenever the bow is drawn across the strings. *Rîḥa* means, properly, a vile and *benna* a pleasant odor. *Ǧallâb* is a merchant who does not sell for money but furnishes the women with perfumes and ornaments, taking from them camel's hair, traveling bags, *mezâwed*, fancy saddle bands, *sefâjef*, etc., in exchange.

Jâ hêh jâ râčeb al-ʿaṭli
sallem w-rudd as-salâmâti
sallem ʿala-lli nwa žatli
ḳul lâ lâ ḥajjen w-lâ mâti.

Hail to thee, who ridest a bony camel,
Salute and the salutes return!
Greet him who has resolved to destroy me,
And say I neither live nor am dead.

ʿAṭli (or *ʿaṭel*) is a bony camel. *Rudd as-salâmâti*, return the salutes—the visitor first salutes all present and is in turn saluted by each of them separately; he again answers every salute. To the ditty just cited the Rwala add the following:

w-ṯnejwâteh teḳel šatli
w-nhejdeh bêẓ al-ḥamâmâti.

Her teeth are like grains of rice
And her breasts round as the eggs of a pigeon.

Judged by its content this verse does not belong to the ditty; it may be a fragment of another with a similar rhyme.

Šatli is the same as *ḥabb ar-ruzz* or *ḥabb at-tummen*, grains of rice or of *tummen*.

Al-waǧd waǧdi ʿala dbajje
waǧd al-abkâr al-maʿâṭîši
dâǧen w-lâǧen ʿala-ṭ-ṭajje
w-al-maʾ baʿîden w-lâ nîši
jâ ḳrûnaha jâten al-mijje
miṯl as-sefâjef ʿala-l-ǧîši
jâ nhûdaha bêẓ ḳudrijje
taẓfi ʿalejh al-ʿačârîši.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD

426 452 time when camel markets are held, namely in July or August, when the Bedouins camping in the tilled country sell their camels, *wakt al-mowsem*. Every debtor brings his bondsman, who declares in the presence of the creditor that so much is owed and that the principal together with the interest, *marbaḥ*, will be paid at a certain stated date. Should the Kubejsi in the meantime die, his host, *mu'azzeb*, collects the amounts due to him and hands them over to his heirs. Debts contracted with the Kubejsât, the Bedouins pay regularly enough, mainly because they fear that otherwise no merchants would come to them.

443 When the Rwala camp in a settled region, some of the big merchants send messengers to the prince to inquire whether he will allow them to come to his camp with goods to sell. If the messengers receive the prince's assurance that he will take them under his protection, *bwağh aš-šejḫ*, the wholesaler loses no time in dispatching his employees to the camp, and before long from fifty to seventy white tents, *ḫijâm*, will be seen in the prince's camp. In these everything is sold that the Bedouin's heart desires. For each of these tents one new pack saddle *ḥedâğe*, and one *roṭol* (2.56 kilograms) of green coffee are delivered to the prince as his due. Their stay in the camp terminates about the middle of August, for at the end of that month the Rwala usually return to the inner desert.

437 435 In the settled territory many merchants take camels in exchange for their wares, thus enabling the Bedouins to provide themselves with everything they need or desire. The sons of the desert are like children in this respect, wanting all they see or whatever takes their fancy and little caring whether they really need it or not. They buy all sorts of expensive things, often toys, which they soon spoil and then simply throw away as useless. As long as they have camels, or at least the money received for them, they pay cash; when this is gone, they either borrow money or buy on credit without worrying when or if ever the debt will be paid. It is a common saying in the desert: "Debt eats away the profit of him who borrows, *ad-dên ḳaṭṭâ' rizž al-mežbel*."

POEMS RELATING TO ḲUṢARA' AND KUBEJSÂT

539* There are frequent references to both the stranger *ḳaṣi* and the merchant in Bedouin poems.

2:Musil S-4,5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

from Arabia, they act as agents for the importing of coffee, spices, and rice, not only by ship or railroad but also by pack camels, and they supply the Bedouins with arms. There is no large settlement in inner Arabia where an agent of Eben Bassâm does not reside. 442

The Âl Sâlem family also is now engaged almost exclusively in the buying and selling of camels. These merchants hail from ad-Der'ijje but live at Bagdad and Damascus. Members of this family once helped the Wahhâbite princes of the Eben Sa'ûd family with money, and even now they have many friends in Negd.

The third firm engaged in trading in camels — also in clothing — is the Âl 'Îsa family. They reside at Damascus and trade chiefly with the 'Aneze and Ḥwêṭât tribes.

The wholesale dealers hardly ever visit inner Arabia. They have their middlemen to whom they furnish money for dealings on their behalf. All these middlemen or agents are natives of al-Ḳaṣîm and are called 'Aḳejl, whether they belong to the tribe of that name or not. An 'Aḳejli agent gets money from the wholesale dealer to buy camels from a certain tribe. He drives the animals which he has bought to Egypt or al-Baṣra or al-Kwejt where he sells them, dividing the net profit with the wholesale dealer in such a way that the latter gets two-thirds or half of it. If the agreement was that the wholesale dealer was to get two-thirds, he must stand the entire loss that may result from the transaction; in the other case the loss is shared equally. It should be said in explanation of this that the demand for camels is not always the same. Often prices in Egypt and al-Baṣra rise suddenly; the Bedouins learn this and ask more too; the middleman or speculator, as he might be called, has to buy dear, but when he brings the camels to the market the price may have fallen and he must sell at a loss. 442 446 [435 455]

Such an 'Aḳejli agent hires assistants, usually his countrymen from al-Ḳaṣîm, provides himself with light white tents, coffee, rice, and often also arms both for sale and exchange, and rides with letters of recommendation to the prince or chief of the tribe from which he means to buy. Having delivered the letters and gifts sent to those dignitaries by the wholesale dealer, he puts up his tents either in the prince's camp or, if permitted, in the camp of some chief. The chief of the camp where the trader has put up his tents is also his host, 442 437

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

442 437 *mu'azzeb*, in so far as he protects him as his guest but does not board him. The Bedouins now bring their camels to his white tents, *ḫijâm*, and as a rule sell them for cash. Only when the agent has brought arms and ammunition from al-Kwejt or al-'Ažêr for sale, will they exchange their animals for these articles. On the sale of every camel the prince or the chief gets one-half or one *meǧîdijje* ($0.45 or 0.90). The purchased animal is then branded with the 'Aḳejli mark and left to graze in the herd with the others. For his herdsmen the 'Aḳejli hires [484] youths from the tribe where he is buying at the time. Many herdsmen accompany the agent's herds as far as Egypt and on their return tell of the wonderful things they have seen or learned on their trip. If the 'Aḳejli buys camels in the inner desert, he remains with the purchased herds for many weeks, or even months, with the same tribe, waiting until it moves to the settled territory, generally toward the end of June. If he buys from tribes who never leave the inner desert he drives the herds he has bought from tribe to tribe, until he comes to some clan of a tribe which leaves as a rule in May or June for the tilled territory in order to supply itself there for its sojourn in the desert. On reaching the border of the desert, the 'Aḳejli proceeds to the nearest large town where camel markets are held. If he can sell his animals there advantageously, he will do so and return to the tribe from which he came and buy camels again; but should he think that he could do better in Egypt, he will buy everything he can from other speculators whom he happens to find in the town and then journey on to Egypt.

442 676 The herds belonging to the 'Aḳejl may be captured by strange raiders, just as the herds of members of the tribe with whom he happens to be migrating, and for that reason the 'Aḳejl have in every large clan their brother, *aḫ*, to whom they pay, *jeḫîḥ*, from four to five Turkish pounds ($18 to 22.50), one good riding camel, and two or three good cloaks annually. This brother is obliged to restore to them every camel stolen by a member of his clan. Among the Rwala and the Weld 'Ali the 'Aḳejl have brothers in the following kins: Eben Mašhûr, Eben Der'ân, Eben Ǧandal, Eben Mǧejd, Eben Me'ǧel, and Eben Ḥamad al-Wlêd'i or al-Wahbi (of the Weld 'Ali, also called the Beni Wahab). If the Rwala bring home from one of their raids camels bearing the 'Aḳejl brand and there is no 'Aḳejli camping with them, the *aḫ* drives these